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C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 002276

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/ERA - BISHARAT AND EUR/AGS - VIKMANIS-KELLER

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SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN REACTION TO DEMARCHE IN ADVANCE OF THE
JULY 18-19 FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING (GAERC)

REF: STATE 124856

Classified By: Economic-Political Counselor Gregory E. Phillips. Reason: 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (SBU) EconPolCouns presented reftel demarche on July 6 to Andreas Riecken, the Austrian Foreign Ministry's EU Correspondent and ESDP Coordinator.

2. (C) Riecken had the following reactions to our points:

-- On China, the EU is preparing for the EU-China Summit in New York in early September. As we noted, there are no indications that the UK presidency will take up the issue of the arms embargo.

-- On Turkey, Riecken said there is "no doubt that negotiations will begin on October 3." The European Commission will present the framework for the negotiations on July 18.

-- On the High Level Event (HLE), Riecken said Austrian President Heinz Fischer would attend.

-- On Uzbekistan, the discussion, Riecken said, would be on how to deal with the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. Some member states are calling for an escalation of activity, and some for the opposite.

3. (C) The GAERC agenda would also include Zimbabwe, the Middle East Peace Process, and the World Trade Organization, Riecken said. In addition, there would be a "reference" to Croatia. Riecken said he did not expect the meeting to result in major decisions, because Carla del Ponte had said in June that she would need "two to three months" to assess Croatia's action plan.

4. (C) Riecken said the coming GAERC should be a short meeting. Austria was assuming a new role as part of the EU troika. Austrian Political Director Thomas Mayr-Harting would participate as part of the troika at the informal Political Directors meeting at Bath.
Brown